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MANAV DHARMA

Spiritual & Inspirational Magazine

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हरिद्वार संग्रह

MANAV DHARMA

Monthly Magazine

Vol. 9 No.xi Nov., 1997

Shri Hans Ji Maharaj- A Compassionate Master

It is in the recent times that Shri Hans Ji Maharaj in flesh and blood lived and travelled from the remote villages to the cosmopolitan cities of India preaching the spiritual knowledge and revealing the Holy Name and the Divine Light to the guileless seekers of truth. How lucky were those, who heard him speaking, had his darshans and served him. Satguru is the deliverer. It is only he, who can deliver the jiva from the pangs and shackles of miseries, sorrows and death. Nirvana is his grace. He was living embodiment of the truth and testimony to the existence of God. He was not a mythological figure, but historical personality, who through his dedication and selfless service, blessed lacs of people in India with the realisation of the Holy Name and Divine Light within their hearts. His message and teachings were so powerful that within a decade after his passing away, it spread all over the world like the teachings of Buddha.

His birthday is celebrated on 8th November by millions of people in India and abroad. We remember him from the core of our hearts and seek his blessings and pay our respects and homage to him on his birthday and feel purified.

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Once He said,

"Never mind. If you fall you can stand up again. Don't be afraid. Just keep on going, no matter how many times you may stumble. Once you have turned to me and taken refuge in me, your salvation is assured. All you have to do is firmly attach yourself to the Holy Word. I, myself will draw you upwards. Meditate on the Divine Light and Holy Name. I've closed the doors of hell for you."

'The true Guru is he who can explain what religion really is. Religion means seeing God face to face and knowing His eternal Name. The one, who can reveal such Knowledge, is the Perfect Master, the Satguru. No one else in the world, besides him, is perfect.

Editor

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Discourse
Shri Satpal Ji Maharaj

Once, Swami Vivekananda was giving satsang in a hall when someone asked him, "In his childhood, Krishna played many lilas. I've read that all the cowherds and milkmaids followed him around. Why would such a crowd follow one person like that?" This is a good question. Much time could've been spent debating this, but Vivekananda didn't get drawn into it. He simply said, "You'll get your answer." He kept on speaking and his audience listened spell-bound. Suddenly he stopped speaking and left the stage. Everyone thought, `He was saying such marvellous things, but now he has gone. Let's follow him.' The hall emptied. After walking for quite some time, Vivekananda turned back, noticed the same man in the crowd and said to him, "I'm going away. Why are you following me?" People said, "Swamiji, you charmed us with your words. You filled our minds with good things. We don't want this goodness to go away. That is why we are following you." Then Vivekananda said to that man, "Sir, you have your answer. The milkmaids of Vrindavan and Cowherds followed Krishna just as you are following me."

The fact that so many people today are following the path of spirituality, which calls for so much dedication and sacrifice, really shows the power of truth. A person loses everything, but in return his soul is filled with peace and satisfaction. Harishchandra gave up his kingdom. Lord Rama had to leave Ayodhya for exile in the forest. Lord Krishna had to leave his home in Vrindavan and Mathura. But in return they had the infinite wealth of spiritual satisfaction.

It doesn't matter if we are confronted with obstacles and difficulties. We have to overcome them. The saints tell us to follow the path of the great masters. But now people just pretend devotion. They run after someone, but they don't do what he says. They don't put his teachings into practice in their own lives. That is why there is something missing in our devotion, in our spiritual practice. Following a master means following his teachings and using them to change your life. One should follow him in thought, word and deed. We have to walk on the path of the great ones.

There is no lack of public lectures, and learned scholars speak edifying words which wouldn't offend anyone and are easily acceptable. But remember, you can't please everyone and benefit them at the same time. If you have a stomach ache, no doctor would tell you to cure it by eating sweets. He's sure to advise you to avoid those things and eat only bland food. Likewise, I've

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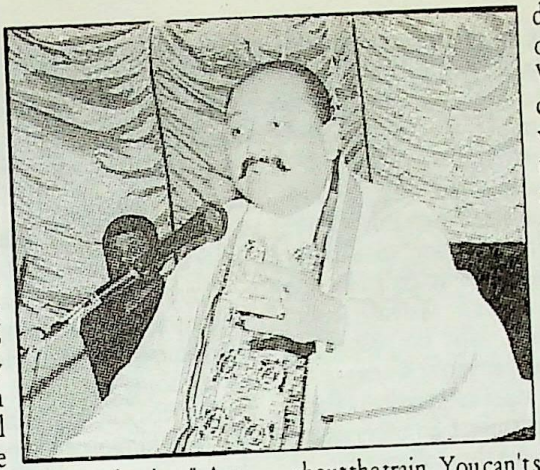

heard plenty of speakers saying pleasant things like, "All rivers merge in the ocean, so you can do whatever you like." Some go so far as to say, "Follow any religion and you'll still merge in the Ocean, you'll still get salvation." Anyone would be happy to hear that! A wrong-doer would think, 'Fantastic! Listen to what he says! I did wrong and was afraid of the consequences. Now I can do even worse and it won't matter. I'll reach God anyhow, so why should I change my ways? I'll get salvation regardless of all other things.' However, if we don't distinguish between right and wrong, how can we ever decide what is essential and what is non-essential in life? A spiritual mentality helps us differentiate, and until you have that kind of mentality you can't discriminate.

"Do anything you like and you'll still reach the destination" it sounds nice. However, just try doing this at a railway station! Many trains are standing there, but would you get on just anyone, thinking that you'll reach your destination anyway? Would you do that? Would you think that simply buying a ticket is enough to get you home? What procedure do you follow at the station? First you ask which train is going to your destination, of course. When it comes to worldly matters we make a lot of enquiries. To reach home we make enquiries. For travelling, you have to enquire about the train. You can't sit in ten trains at one time, and who knows if the train you choose at random will take to your destination. Even so, if you catch the wrong train you can always change trains furtheron. But you can't change the vehicle of the human body.

People have tried everything to save man from death. Research goes on all the time. Plastic hearts and steel bones are produced, but no one has been able to fabricate the life-force itself, and when that vital force detaches itself from the body, medicine will not work. Even the greatest doctors then admit defeat. Man has not been able to conquer death. This human vehicle is not transferable. You may wish to extend your life by trading in an aged body, but so far that hasn't been possible. You can't bring back the precious breaths which you are constantly burning up. This precious time will not come back. It is said, "Time and tide wait for no one."

So consider that, if you can't have this life back again, is it wise to think

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that you can follow any path and still reach the goal? More than likely you'd consider it better to search for the true way, for the true name of God. It is a fact that all rivers flow towards the sea. Why? Because they follow a natural law which is immutable. Water always flows from a higher elevation to a lower elevation. Sea level is generally the lowest level of land, therefore rivers flow towards it. Why do people put water tanks on their roofs? When you fill the tank, the water automatically flows down into the faucets. So rivers merge in the sea because they follow a natural law. What is the great law of human life? What Great Law is common to all religions? Books are many and varied. Dogmas and traditions are different. Someone believes that if you don't bathe in the Ganges you'll go to hell. Another believes that if you don't make the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina you'll go to hell. Still another says that if you don't read the Bible and repent of your sins you'll go to hell. So who will go to heaven?

What is the truth? The saints and sages dived deep within and declared that truth is one, reality is one. Different sages expressed it differently. However, sugar is sweet and stays sweet no matter which language you use to describe it. It won't become sour if you use a different language. So if truth is one, then what is it? It is truth and you have to experience inside yourself. You have to realize this power within yourself.

At one time, Rome was the centre of civilisation and culture. There was a saying that 'all roads lead to Rome', because that's where everyone wanted to go. But there were roads which led away from Rome also. If a person took one of those exit roads, even if he chanted all the while, "All roads lead to Rome," would he reach Rome? No. Likewise, we should wonder if we are going towards God or away from Him.

Sages said that there are two kinds of knowledge: para and apara. What is apara knowledge? Knowledge without experience is incomplete. This is true for material knowledge also. Scientists first of all formulate a hypothesis, not a theory. They test the hypothesis and only then does it become a theory, because it has been proven to be true. All literature is apara knowledge. Books contain words and meanings and they have value, no doubt. They give us information about so many things. However, if you think that because you have a book about electricity you don't need the electric company, because the book itself will light up the room, then you're wrong. You won't get light. But if you light even a small candle, the room will immediately be lit up. Something real is the core of all worldly knowledge. A map shows the courses of rivers, but will those rivers quench your thirst? No. You have to go to a tap. The map represents apara knowledge and the tap is the real thing, because it provides the water which will actually quench your thirst. We can increase our store of material knowledge through maps, but when it comes to the Truth, to the Reality, we must enter the realm of para knowledge, because it is the only knowledge which can reveal the Truth to us.

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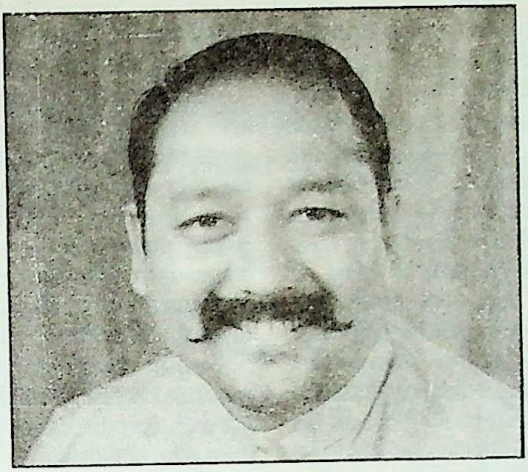

Once a certain man was so hungry that he had to go begging. He knocked on the door of a grammarian, who opened the door and asked, "What do you want?" The man said, "I'm hungry, Sir." The linguist said, "Speak properly! Your speech is very vulgar. Go and read such-and-such a book. It is very detailed. It will help you improve your speech and enlarge your vocabulary." The beggar replied, "I don't want to improve my speech. I want food." The linguist said, "Forget about food! Let's talk about grammar and purification of language." The hungry man thought, `All I'll get here is words, not food. I'll try another house.'

The next house belonged to a philosopher, a logician. He opened the door and asked, "What do you want?" The beggar answered, "I am very hungry. Please give me a couple of slices of bread." The logician ansered, "Proven to me that you are hungry! Then we'll think about getting some food." The beggar thought, 'I won't get anything here, either. How can I prove my hunger?' Then he said, "Please, my stomach is sticking to my ribs!" The logic professor said, "You don't seem to have a disease which would shrink your stomach. Prove to me that you are hungry." So the poor fellow left.

The next house belonged to an author. He opened his door and said kindly, "What kind of book would you like?" The beggar said, "I don't need books. I only want food. A couple of slices of bread would be enough." The writer said, "We'll come to that later. Tell me which books you have read." The beggar thought, "I won't get anything here, either.' So he moved on.

Finally, he knocked on the door of a man who had some common sense, who was reasonable and practical. When he heard the beggar's plight, he gave him some food. The poor beggar said, "Sir, you have saved my life. I was trapped by people who would have let me die." The wise man asked, "Where? What happened?" The beggar explained "I knocked at several doors-a grammarian's, a philosopher's and an author's. All they did was blow their own trumpets. They told me nothing useful, nor did they give me anything to eat. I was hungrier than ever." The practical man thought, `They are all learned scholars,

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yet they need to be taught a lesson.'

So, one holiday, he invited the three of them to dinner. Huge trays were brought, covered with cloths. This was a new kind of arrangement for them and they were curious to know what kind of food they would get. The grammarian thought, 'He has prepared a big feast. There must be all kinds of things on those trays.' They were starving because they had deliberately not eaten the night before. But what did the grammarian find when he lifted the cloth? A grammar book! What did the logician find? A book on law and logic! What did the writer find? A novel. Then their host said, "Gentlemen, I have prepared your favourite dishes. Eat up!" They said, "This is not going to satisfy our hunger!" Their host replied, "If your talking could satisfy the hunger of a beggar, then it should satisfy you, too. So eat!"

We may be learned in grammar, logic and literature, but what will that do for us? We'll still be like beggars. We need real things. To control the mind, to satisfy the cravings of the mind, we need the Holy Name. We need the Master. Without this, we can't grow spiritually.

Why did the saints and sages tell us to remember the Holy name? They all had tried different things before. Tulsidas was madly in love with his wife. St. Surdas, whose former name was Biloo Mangal, was crazy about a girl named Chintamani. How did their lives changes? They were into maya, into worldliness, but found it to be hollow. It couldn't give them peace. Afterwards they talked only about God, saying that He alone is Truth, consciousness and bliss.

This can also be proven scientifically. The smallest particle of matter is the atom. If you study atoms you'll find that they all want to be inert. They all want satisfaction. They combine together, they exchange electrons, to become inert. Many chemical substances are formed by this process. But what is the secret, the mystery behind it?

Human beings are composed of atoms and we also have the desire for inertness, for satisfaction. We also want the wealth of satisfaction. That is why we all want happiness. No one wants misery. Even people who practise austerities are motivated by a desire to secure a place in heaven for eternity. By a little bit of suffering they hope to achieve a great amount of happiness.

Peace and happiness are natural human aims. Every nation manufactures weapons. Every country has armed forces. But whether they make huge stockpiles of bombs and weapons or not, whether they make battleships and fighter planes or not, they all want peace. The United Nations was created for peace, so that nations could discuss and negotiate and talk about peace. However, until our lives are peaceful, until our family life is peaceful, our society cannot be peaceful. Nations cannot be peaceful until communities are peaceful. And if you want peace in your country, in your community and in your family, first of all, you yourself must be peaceful. The saints said that the Holy Name is the giver of peace, of bliss and highest joy, and if you medi-

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tate on it, you will feel peace.

If you throw a stone into the air, after travelling a certain distance it reaches a point where it stops. It becomes stationary. If your car runs out of gas it will automatically stop. The ultimate state of everything in the world is the state of rest, of stability, of equilibrium. How does one become stable? Through yoga. Now, yoga doesn't mean running away from the world and hiding in a cave. Yoga means the conquest of maya, stilling the fluctuations of the mind. Yoga doesn't mean running away. If the final state of everything is equilibrium, then this must be man's destination, too. But how can we achieve this? The fickle mind, which has made our lives restless and unstable, keeps on running.

It is said that after a certain period of time, even the Creator rests. The creation also returns to a point of rest. Even our body becomes stationary. When the soul has departed, the body is at rest. But only the body! The mind isn't, because the thing which could control it has left.

Once St. Kabir was bathing at Hardwar. He noticed a man who was twisting a rosary but whose attention was on some ladies bathing nearby. So Kabir sang this song: "You twist some beads in your hand and twist your tongue in your mouth, but your mind is flying in all directions. This is not meditation."

If you place a target somewhere, for example, on a tree, then you'll focus on that tree and nowhere else. Wherever you aim the arrow of your mind, that becomes its target. Where will you direct your worship? How will you worship the Holy Name?

First we should consider what that Name is into which we have to merge the mind. Only concentration on something which is itself unchanging will stabilise the mind. Take any aspect of maya. Everything is constantly changing. Today you buy a new radio and after five years it is old. Whatever is new today is obsolete tomorrow. Everything in the material world is changeable. Today your clothes are new, but after some time they will become dirty and worn-out. Everything around us is transient, so how can it control the mind? If you concentrate on a moving bus, how can your mind become still? It will run even faster. If you want to aim at a flying bird, but you don't follow it in your gunsight, you won't hit the target, because the bird will be ahead of where you are shooting. Similarly, the changeable things of the world will make your mind even more unsteady.

What is beyond the changeability of the world? What is unchanging, constant and eternal? Guru Nanak described it thus: "It was true in the beginning, it is true now and will always be true." It has no beginning and no end. That energy is stationary and eternal. The law of conservation says that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, so if you put your mind into the Energy which is eternal and everlasting, your mind will become stable, but if you put your mind into maya, it will never stabilise.

Krishna lived in the Third Age (Dwapara) and he gave Knowledge to Arjuna. Arjuna knew about the First and

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Second Ages. He could study the history of Rama and his noble deeds. But when he became confused, these things couldn't inspire him. Only when he surrendered to the living master and said, "Lord, please tell me what is best for me," were his doubts removed. The Knowledge that was revealed to him was the Knowledge of the soul which manifests from the soul alone.

How can we recognize the Truth? When the Guru of Guru Tegh Bahadur was dying, he was heard to say, "Bakala." So people took this to mean that his successor would be found in Bakala. Soon in Bakala there was a self-proclaimed guru on every street corner! Big temples were being built and each guru was claiming to be the real one. But the truth cannot be concealed by lies. At that time, the real guru, Tegh Bahadur, was also living in Bakala, but everyone called him crazy and a good-for-nothing. However, there was a merchant who called out from the depths of his heart to the real Guru, and announced from the top of the roof of his house that he had found the real Guru.

We always call upon the Lord when we are in difficulty. I have seen atheists, who would otherwise never think of God, call out to Him when they meet with a mishap. Then everyone says, "God saved me." When do you think about a doctor? When you are ill. When do you remember God? When you are in danger. That is why saints always welcomed suffering. St. Kabir said, "I consider joy to be a misfortune if it makes me forget the Holy Name and I consider misfortune a joy if it makes me remember the Holy Name."

So what is that Name which is all-pervading? Rama's incarnation was limited to a period of time in the Treta Age. Krishna lived in the Dwapara Age. But what is that Name which existed throughout all ages? It is everlasting and protects devotees of all times.

Tulsidas said that in this Dark Age neither devotion nor truly righteous action is possible, and the only resort is the Holy Name. One saint said, "Meditate on God with each breath." What kind of meditation? On what should we meditate? With the help of saints you can find it and realize it to be everywhere.

Wherever there is a river, there must also be a boat for crossing it. If maya can be compared to an ocean, then there must also be a boat in which we can cross it. That boat is the Holy Name. The Name has been described as being infinitely powerful.

Since the beginning of time, good and evil have existed. They have always been battling one another, one rising and the other falling. But the glory of the Knowledge, of the Truth, is that it always conquers, it always upholds righteousness. When the time comes, righteousness also protects it. Whatever you take care of will some day take care of you and be a source of benefit to you. If you look after your roof, it will protect you from rain, but if you break the roof it can't protect you. If you take care of something, it will take care of you. So if you look after dharma, it will look after you.

Once, Rama was building a bridge to

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Lanka. He asked two of his devotees, Nila and Nala, "What power do you have that you can make rocks float, while if I throw a stone into the water it sinks?" Nowadays, everyone wants to be greater than the others. Everyone thinks he is ahead of everyone else, yet they are all nobodies! Yet Lord Rama was speaking humbly like this! Nila and Nala replied, "Lord, we are sinners. If we touch something it floats, due to the boon we received, but if you throw something away, if you throw someone away, he can't be saved in any world. There is no hope for him." Someone who gets separated from spirituality, from Knowledge, has no place anywhere.

Nowadays, everything is upside-down. That which is true is called false, while the false is called true. That which is colourless is called colourful. there is a little story that one day Truth and Untruth went for a swim in a river. They left their clothes on the riverbank and dived into the water. The first to come out of the water was Untruth. He put on Truth's clothes and left and that is why Untruth walks around disguished as Truth!

Bad news spreads faster than good news. Just read the newspapers. Do you see anything except bad news? We've become instruments of bad news, like a radio which broadcasts bad news. That is why saints said that someone who doesn't listen to satsang cannot keep a positive outlook, and their ears are just like snake holes. The eyes of a person who doesn't visit saints are just like the false eyes on a peacock's tail-they are actually sightless.

If we don't use our God-given faculties to elevate ourselves, these faculties are in vain. The body will eventually be left behind, so to make it to worthwhile, to take advantage of the chance it gives us, we should listen to satsang and meditate on God. This is the essence of life. This is the point of life. Our duty is to safeguard Truth and righteousness just as all the saint and holy Masters did.

At times, truth is also tested. Anything which is burned by fire comes out purified. Gold is refined by fire. Any impurities are burned away. Life contains friction. Was there any saint whose life was troublefree? But they faced all dangers and tribulations and did not swerve from the path of righteousness.

Truth demands sacrifice and only human beings can do that. Someone who sacrifices for the truth becomes a living embodiment of the truth. Once you reach the top of the mountain you can see everything. If you stay in the valley you'll see nothing except that valley. The saints were spiritually elevated so they saw clearly and perceived God in everything. They saw Rama and Sita in everything. They saw Shiva and Shakti in everything. It's a matter of elevating oneself. But there is a difference in what the great souls taught and what people think they taught. People just fake religion and think that it is a game or a showy display. But true religion demands sacrifice. True religion demands self-sacrifice, yet it purifies your life and makes it worthwhile.

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Extracts from Ramcharitmanas

Having courteously honoured his guests with high ceremony, gifts, apologies and compliments, he gladly proceeded to pay his humble respects with the utmost devotion to the gathering of saints. Bowing and invoking the gods he joined his hands and prayerfully addressed them, "Gods and saints seek love alone--can the ocean be propitiated by an offering of a handful of water?"

Janak and Kusaketu addressed Dasarath in the following loving, courteous and winning way, "Your Majesty, I have been greatly exalted by this alliance--my realm and all I own is freely yours to command. Take these girls as your handmaidens and graciously care for them. Please excuse me for having been so presumptuous as to call you here. The King, the glory of the Solar Dynasty, in turn addressed the brides' royal fathers in terms of highest honour--their mutual courtesy was indescribable and their hearts burst with love. The host of gods rained down flowers as King Dasarath returned to the guests' apartments to the sound of drums, cheering and Vedic chants. Both Heaven and earth rejoiced. Then, at Vashishta's command, the brides' charming companions escorted them and their bridegrooms to where the families' patron deities had been installed for the wedding ceremony.

Sita gazed oft at Shri Rama, outwardly shrinking in modesty but inwardly refusing to Shrink. Her lovely eyes, thirst with love, outshone the fish's.

Dark-skinned and naturally graceful, Rama's beauty put to shame a myriad Loves. His red-dyed feet, the lotuses which forever attract the bee-like minds of sages, looked most lovely. His pure and gleaming yellow robe outshone both the rising sun and lightning. The little bells on his waistband tinkled bewitchingly and his long arms were covered with beautiful ornaments. His yellow sacred thread enhanced his charm and the rings on his fingers would ravish any heart. Adorned with all sorts of wedding finery he looked entrancing. With special ornaments decorating his broad chest, a yellow scarf fringed with pearls and jewels across his shoulder, shining earrings, lotus eyes, lovely brows, well-shaped nose, bewitching forehead markings, and gorgeous wedding crown with inlaid pearls and gems, he was altogether the very picture of beauty.

His crown with its knotted gems and his comely face ravished every heart and there was not a lady--mortal or celestial--who did not break a blade of grass at the sight of his beauty. They scattered jewels, garments and ornaments about him then sang Arti, while the gods rained down flowers and minstrels and bards sang his glory. Married women joyfully escorted the bridal couples to the deities' pavilion, and with

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festal songs they began to perform the traditional rituals. Bhavani herself showed Rama and Sarada showed Sita how to offer food to each other. All the ladies of the household were caught up in the merrymaking, enjoying this, the climax of their lives. In the jewels on her hand Sita caught Shri Rama's reflection and she dared not move her arm or eyes for fear of losing sight of him. The ecstasy and love, the gaiety and mirth of the occasion surpassed all telling; Sita's companions alone could know. They escorted the four enchanting couples to the guests' quarters. This gave rise to great exultation on earth as well as in Heaven. Everyone cried in delight, "Long live the four happy couples!" Yogis, great sages, siddhas and deities beat their drums as they beheld the Lord. They showered flowers and cheered, "Glory! Glory!"

Then the four princes, together with their brides, approached their father and there was so much splendour, blessedness and joy that it seems to overflow all over.

There was another magnificent banquet, to which all the members of the bridegrooms' party were invited. The finest carpets were spread before the King as he went forth with his sons. After reverently washing his guests' feet, Janak seated them according to rank. He bathed the King of Ayodhya's feet with indescribable courtesy. Then he bathed Rama's feet, which are forever enshrined in Shiva's heart. In like manner he washed the feet of Rama's brothers, too, regarding them as Rama's peers. He gave all of them appropriate seats and then gave his orders to the butlers. The leaf-shaped plates set before the guests were made of precious stones joined with golden pins.

The adroit and polite waiters in a trice had served everyone with curry, rice and ghee, all delicious and pure.

After making the five offerings with the first five morsels of food, the guests commenced eating and were entertained with humorous songs. First they were served with a variety of confectionery, sweet as nectar and incomparably delicious. The well-trained waiters then served gastronomical delights too numerous to be counted. Each of the four basic categories of food and the six flavours were represented by an endless variety of dishes. As the banquet proceeded, jests were bandied about and each of the guests was mentioned by name. The charming raillery greatly amused King Dasarath and his party. Thus they dined and when they had finished they were given water for rinsing their mouths. Janak offered Dasarath betel and then the most glorious of all monarchs retired cheerfully to his own apartments.

Each passing day brought some new festivity to the city--days and nights seemed to pass like a moment. The jewel of kings, Dasarath, awoke early as mendicants chanted his praises. As he gazed upon the gallant princes with their beautiful brides, the rapture in his soul was beyond all telling. When he had completed his morning routine he called upon his Guru with his heart full of exultation and love. The King made obeisance, paid him homage and prayed, "O lord of sages, it is due to your grace that all my ambitions have been realized this day. Please summon the holy men and present them with decorated cows." The Guru applauded this and sent for the sages. ●●

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Discourse Shri Mata Ji

Whatever I tell you is for your own good, to help you walk along the true way, the path of peace, True Name of God and meditate on it. The Knowledge which you have received is in accordance with all scriptures and religions. It is eternal and indestructible. It is within you and is with you always.

"God is everywhere, but you can't see Him. Without knowing the right technique, you won't find Him." No matter which rituals you perform, or which scriptures you study, until you find the living Master, the enlightened soul of the time, these things won't do you any good. These three must be alive: a doctor, a head of state and a spiritual Master. If you don't go to the living Master, you will never be enlightened. You will not know the correct place to focus your mind, nor can you see your soul and find everlasting peace.

You don't realize what we are doing for you. After we have gone people will weep when they hear about us. But people don't understand. Devotees don't either. You don't realize what Hans-Darbar is all about. People are prepared to fast, pray, do anything to have children. People ask me for all kinds of things. In India women often ask me to bless them with a son. They never ask for a daughter! People have all kinds of desires, but I haven't met anyone who has really unlocked the treasure-chest of Knowledge within themselves and wants nothing more than to spread this Knowledge. No one has yet expressed such thoughts to me. Shri Hans Ji Maharaj used to visit premies' houses on foot, sometimes on horseback, sometimes in a bullock-cart or even by camel! He would use whatever means was available to reach devotees to give them satsang.

People don't want to wake up. There are premies who practise devotion with some ulterior motive, such as passing exams or to have children, or to marry their children into affluent families. People do everything out of selfishness. They are completely caught up in themselves. I rarely meet devotees who say, "Mata Ji, I don't want anything except to serve you." Everyone has some selfish desire or other. St. Kabir said that a person who considers himself free is actually bound, whereas someone who is bound (to the Master) is in fact free. Real action takes place only when you realize that you are not the doer. When a person practises Knowledge he is freed from all bondage. You get upset and lose your peace of mind over the least little thing, but just see what the great Masters had to endure. Sita was entitled to every luxury. She was a great

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queen, but she voluntarily chose fourteen years of exile in the jungle and, even though she was a young married woman, she kept a vow of celibacy. Then she was kidnapped and threatened by Ravanna. What injustice she had to suffer!

The life of a householder is very difficult. You have to put up with so many things. You have to harmonize your family life and your spiritual life. Joy and sorrow are integral parts of life. A person is great and noble if he can live in the world in the midst of life's trials yet rise above them.

This is the Darbar of Shri Hans Ji Maharaj. It is here you receive true Knowledge. We don't give you a rosary and tell you to chant a mantra. We have awakened you spiritually. We have revealed the Inner Knowledge to you, the Eternal Knowledge which all religions talk about, which is mentioned in all the scriptures. And all the scriptures are in agreement that one should remember God's Name. You know what that Name is, which is beyond mind and intellect. We have shown you what it is. This Knowledge is one and the same for everyone, no matter what their creed or station in life. The same spiritual Knowledge is shown to one and all. Knowledge does not discriminate against anyone. Satsang does not discriminate against anyone. We don't tell you to leave your religion for another. Religion is the cause of so much hostility. People kill each other in the name of religion, but the Teachers around whom the religions arose actually taught brotherly love. True religion can bind all humanity on the thread of love. Religion teaches unity and concord, never discord.

Now is the time to realize the value of service. You will go down in history. Look, all the houses you build, all the possessions you accumulate, won't go with you. You will go to the grave or the crematorium alone. This body which you care so much for, which you feed and clothe so nicely, will one day be reduced to dust. It will be disposed of according to the religion you profess. Some people bury their dead, others cremate and still others feed the corpse to the birds. People do whatever rituals their religion dictates. They all follow blindly.

Learn the lessons of service. It will deepen your realisation. Labourers can be hired to work. What do they know

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about serving? This Darbar inspires us to serve. I've observed time and time again that if a person doesn't do service his mind is always unsettled. It is never focused. A devotee who serves is placid and patient. He is never confused or fearful. You can learn from history, especially religious history, how devotees used to serve. They were ready to sacrifice their lives if that was what their Master wanted.

How holy is the Knowledge which you have received! You may lose all your wealth; your body, too, will be reduced to ashes one day, but this Name will always be with you. When your mind merges in it you will experience peace. You will find God.

I call someone a devotee if he feels Maharaj Ji's work to be his own. If devotees work together, what can't they accomplish? People will be inspired by you, too. Our ashram in Surat was built by a person who doesn't have Knowledge yet. The Master can get his work done through anyone he chooses, but devotees tend to hang back. Lord Rama said that only a devotee who serves selflessly can cross the ocean of mortality.

Liberation without serving is impossible. The disciple who is faithful in service is remarkable. You've read a lot of scriptures and we quote them to you also, but now is the time for service. You can't evolve spiritually without it. Whether you are rich or poor, you will make some kind of arrangement for shelter, be it a hut or a palace. So learn about service here in the shelter of the Master. Let satsang inspire you and just see what happens! Ravanna told Lakshman, "Don't put off good deeds until tomorrow, because tomorrow never comes. I really did intend to do things-like building a stairway to Heaven and making the ocean sweet. But I delayed in doing so and this has brought about my ruin. I could have done it; all powers were at my command, but I put off doing it and instead rushed to do evil, which has brought about my downfall."

The same applies to us. When it comes to doing something good, we think, "Oh, I'll do it tomorrow, or I can do it when I'm old and have nothing else to do." Do you know for sure how long your body will last? You have no idea at all. You may die young or old. Even children die. The body is as transient as a bubble and as fragile as a pottery jar. You know how easily a jar breaks, even though the potter makes it with such care. So we feel compassion for you and give you Knowledge, because it is good for you and will uplift you. How much love and compassion the Master feels for his disciples! What a wonderful Knowledge our Maharaj Ji has given us! Even the most simple, uneducated people can realize it.

I've been to places where extremely simple, unsophisticated people live. Once I visited a village in Rajasthan. The villagers wondered what I would like to eat. I asked them, "What do you eat?" They replied, "Millet chapaties and lassi." I told them that I would have the same. So they brought me thick millet chapaties, lemon pickle, a huge chilli and a big glass of lassi. They made other fancier dishes, too, but I can never

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forget how good those chapaties and lassi tasted! When a person's mind is contented, he can adjust anywhere. Practising the Holy Name and cultivating a spirit of indifference to worldliness keeps the mind still and settled. Cows, horses and oxen are unruly, so we use reins to keep them under control. But what do you have to keep your mind under control? The mind is the cause of all the tension and unrest. The mind is not easily calmed, so that is why an infinite Knowledge is necessary. That is why satsang is necessary. That is why I say that everyone must know the correct technique for concentrating the mind, and that everyone should meditate on the Almighty Power of God. Having a wife, children and possessions is no big deal. You can get these later. Even non-human species enjoy these things. This human body is the gateway to liberation. You can attain salvation. You can liberate your soul. You can find everlasting peace of mind. This is what the scriptures say and so do the saints. If you don't take advantage of this opportunity, you'll have to revolve in the wheel of birth and death. Who knows how many times we've passed through the portals of Death! Who could be more stupid than the person who, having heard satsang stays stuck in the same rut? So realise the Holy Name. Meditate on it. Meditate and find peace of mind. But on which Name should we meditate? There are a lot of names. Saint Kabir said, "There are thousands of names for God in this world, but they won't save you. Only a rare saint knows the Primordial Name which is remembered deep within." You have to know the Name which is already present in your heart, which pervades your breath. So when and how can you find out what it is? First, listen to satsang. Satsang also awakens a sense of discrimination and dispassion within you and you aspire to know what this Name is. Satsang can clarify the most profound spiritual mysteries. Also one saint said, "The musk deer searches all around for the scent which emanates from its own navel. Similarly, God dwells within every heart, but nobody knows."

God exists within every single human being, but still everyone wanders around in confusion. The mind is amazingly speedy. It roams all over the place in search of peace and satisfaction, like the musk-deer in its ignorance. All the time the fragrance is in the deer's navel, while it searches here and there. In the same way, peace is within every person, but because they don't look for it there, they wander around searching for it everywhere else, in vain. St. Brahmanand sang this song:

O saints, I have seen a great miracle.

In the middle of the sky there is a well,

From which the blissful Nectar continually drips.

A cripple climbs up without a ladder,

And drinks to his heart's content.

Without instruments and with no musicians,

Drums, flutes, guitars, bells, conches and cymbals

Play day and night.

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A deaf man is intoxicated, forgetting himself.

Where there is no foundation,
There is a beautiful palace.
And it shimmers with Divine Light.
A blind man is enraptured by the Light,
And describes its glories in detail.
A man stays alive even in death,
And is strong without food.
Only a rare saint understands this experience.

St. Brahmanand is saying that only a rare saint can understand the secret which he is describing. How many times have you people read this, but still you don't understand its significance. Shri Ramakrishna said that any mantra uttered by the tongue is spoiled. Any name for God which is spoken by the tongue is soiled. The Name which we have revealed to you is not spoken by the tongue. It is within your breath. The great enlightened souls reveal this secret, sacred Name so that mankind may evolve. Some people take Knowledge then forget it. Lord Krishna said that the mind is controlled only by practice. There is no other way. So do as much meditation as you can. Worldly people fritter away their lives in sensual enjoyment, but only realised souls show others the Knowledge which is beyond the mind and the senses.

A person's consciousness cannot evolve without satsang, service, meditation and darshan. A chair can only stand upright when all its four legs are sturdy. I also received this Knowledge from my Master, I could have just stayed sitting in samadhi. But I believe in action. God designed this body for action.

A good devotee regards his Master's work at his own. His attitude is like that of a soldier on sentry duty. He is ever-alert, because if he is caught napping by his superior officer, he will be suspended. A devotee, too, is always alert, anticipating his Master's arrival. He is always keen to avoid any errors which would displease the Master. A person who goes against his Master can never find peace anywhere-not at home, nor in the forest, nor at any holy place.

You will leave the world empty-handed. When the soul has flown away, only an empty frame remains. So don't act proud in front of great souls. Don't be arrogant. Learn to bend. When your pen falls on the floor you stoop to pick it up. To get water, you have to place your bucket underneath the tap. If you want to drink water from a tap you have to bend. If someone wants something from another person, he should be humble. But people nowadays don't want to bow their head to an enlightened soul. There is saying that a living body bends, but a dead body's stiffness identifies it as a corpse.

We reveal the Infinite Light to you. We open your Third Eye. If anyone knows of a place where knowledge of a Fourth Eye is being given, we'll all go there! Now, if you don't meditate and realise Knowledge, you have only yourself to blame. Now is the time to realise. God has given us everything pure and good, but if we don't remember Him, what will our condition be? Guru Nanak

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said, "Now is the time to wake up if you're going to, because when you lie down for the last time it'll be too late."

So remember the Holy Name. Anything else you think about will just lead you closer to death, whereas the Name will free you forever. Lord Krishna also said that a person whose mind is not under his control is neither a yogi nor a renunciate. A person who has conquered his mind has conquered the world. In this we should take a lesson from the Himalayas-no matter how much snow falls on them, no matter how harsh are the winds that buffer them, they never move.

Without realizing this Holy Name you can't achieve liberation, and if it can't be realised, then all the scriptures are wrong. You can know it and realized souls can reveal it to you. God has made this entire universe. He has made us and we can know him. He is hidden within us, 'like the oil within the sesame seed and the fire within flint.' Butter is hidden within milk, but can be extracted only by churning. You get oil only when you grind the sesame seeds. In the same way, God is concealed within your breath, so how will you see Him? When the Master comes and gives you Knowledge of the Soul. The Holy Name is the only thing which is always with you.

I know an old man, a doctor, who developed mouth cancer. He had an operation which left his face disfigured and paralysed. He can't remember anything now. All the degrees he earned, all the knowledge and experience are gone. He said that the only thing he can remember now is the Holy Name, because he had previously done a lot of meditation. When you grow old and feeble you can't remember anything. So meditate on the Holy Name and build up your practice. When you attend a satsang program, you leave your job and your housework behind. You know that business will carry on as usual in your absence. In the same way, when you have departed from this world, it will carry on without you. So remember the Holy Name, day and night. Now is the time to get on with it.

●●

It is easy enough to say,
'I do not believe in God.'
For God permits all things
to be said of Him with impunity.
He looks at our acts.
And any breach of His Law
carries with it,
not its vindictive,
but its purifying,
compelling punishment.

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Discourse
Shri Hans Ji Maharaj

Three points are under discussion here today:

1.How and when can a person see the Divine Light described by all the scriptures?

2. Which religion gives salvation to all alike? Which religion can everyone believe in?

3. Which is the easiest method, common to all religions, of stilling the mind? Which is the only name which can concentrate mind?

Why was it necessary to convene this conference? So many major religious leaders and intellectuals do so, after all. I met some Russians who informed me that they don't believe in any form of religion. When I asked them what they did believe in, they answered that they believe in 'peace'. But you have to understand what peace is and how to get it. We feel peaceful if we get a glass of water when we are thirsty, food when we are hungry, or a job when we are unemployed. Peace is dear to us all. However, there are two kinds of peace–internal and external, or, in other words, lasting and temporary. Food, clothing and shelter will give temporary feelings of peace but won't get rid of mental anguish. Religion is the action prescribed as being necessary for eternal peace. A son's duty is to obey his father, a father's duty is to steer his children on the right path. A husband's duty is to protect and care for his wife and the wife's duty is to serve her husband in every away she can.

These days, politicians say that we shouldn't bring religion into politics. This means that Krishna was wrong to instruct Arjuna in spirituality during a battle. But people have forgotten what religion really is. There is no real religion nowadays. For Bombayites, Bombay is their religion. For Lahore residents, it's Lahore. For Christians, religion means believing in Jesus Christ. For Muslims, it's believing in Mohammed. For orthodox Hindus, it's worshipping idols and reading the Vedas. But nobody ever stops to wonder why so many religions exist in the first place. What is the origin, the seed of all religions?

Where do they all come from? Whatever I am saying, I say for the sake of all mankind. "The human body is attained by great luck. It is difficult even for the gods to get, so say the scriptures." Many people think that the above verse was said by Lord Rama of the Hindus to the Hindus, so it's nothing to do with them. But, the rare fortune of getting a human body is being explained to those who blindly worship gods and goddesses. If they know that this human life is difficult even for those gods to get, they would never waste it

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serving the gods. No god or goddess, no animal, bird or fish can cook food, although all of them can eat. To eat is bhog (enjoyment, or experiencing the result of action) while cooking is a karma (act). Just as no other species can cook food, so knowledge of the religion by which everlasting peace is achieved can be had only in a human life time.

There are two types of belief in this world. Christians and Muslims, on the one hand, do not believe in rebirth. The other group, such as Hindus and Buddhists, does. So will we know the dharma which will give us peace when we enter the cycle of reincarnation or when we are shut up in the grave? What are you doing for the afterlife now that you have this human frame? People express their views for a short time, are acclaimed, then leave this world.

Even if one rules an empire for a million years, he still excretes after eating. What else does he do? Religion means, realizing God. One who does not remember the Almighty after getting a human body is called ungrateful. How beautiful a body God has given us! He gave us eyes to see, ears to hear and nose to smell. What nice food He's provided for us! But we have forgotten our obligation to Him and travel around the world for the sake of enjoyment. We are like the pig which goes around the village in the morning looking for leftovers to eat. Man also wanders here; and there only for enjoying sense-pleasures.

A soul gets four graces. The first grace is God's. How could the soul get a human body if God had not created the body in the first place? If, after getting such a beautiful and priceless gift, one does not remember the Giver, then he is nothing but an ingrate.

The second grace is that of the scriptures, which tell us that salvation cannot be had without Guru. In the scriptures, there are four types of sounds mentioned: para, pashyanti, madhyama and baikhari. We speak through baikhari sound. Madhyama originates in the throat and pashyanti from the diaphragm. Beyond that is the para sound which cannot be known without the help of the perfect Guru. If someone does not want to know it, then let him not know it. It's no skin off my nose! You have come to the door of salvation, which cannot be attained now without getting Knowledge. So meditate on the primordial vibration, lest you have to go back into the cycle of rebirth and suffer various

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sorts of pain.

Because of his devotion to Truth, a heavenly plane came to King Harishchandra to heaven. He said, "I have to repay a debt to my employer. I'll go to heaven only if he can come too." The angels turned to his employer and said, "You don't deserve it, but due to his righteousness you can come too."

That man said, "I keep pigs. Only if they can come with me will I go." The angels then said to the pigs, "How could you ever hope for such a destiny? Anyway, because of Harishchandra's spirituality, you can come too." The pigs asked, "Will we get soil to eat in heaven?": The angels replied, "In heaven, everyone drinks nectar." The pig then refused, saying, "Then heaven's not the place for us!" The point of the story is that a person who wallows in sensuality like a pig in filth regards liberation as nothing, yet will risk his life to get the petty pleasures of the world.

You go to scrores of teachers to learn ABC, but feel there is no need of a teacher for spiritual knowledge, which is knowing the Light which is not illuminated by the sun, the moon or fire.

Guru Nanak said, "I revere you, Guru Maharaj Ji, again and again. You took no time kin transforming me from a man into a god. If a hundred moons and thousands of suns rose together, even in such a blaze of light, one is still in deep darkness without Guru." St.Kabir said, "On the horizon of the inner sky there shines a light. A guruless person cannot reach it. Only a disciple of the True Master can get there."

Know the real Name of God for concentration of mind and remember it constantly, irrespective of your religion, which may be Christianity, Islam, Sikhism or Jainism. This Name, which can also be remembered; while you are sleeping and dreaming, should be known and meditated upon. A being remembers the same Name in the womb, but forgets it upon being born. It is said in the Gita, "Remember Me at all times and fight." Nobody can say that he can't meditate. This Name pervades everybody. Until you meet the perfect spiritual Master who imparts the Knowledge of that Name which is already in your heart, it cannot be known. That Name is beyond the 26 letters of the alphabet. It is beyond expression.

It is said in the Gita that the duration of the Four World-Ages--Satyuga, Treta, Dwapara and Kaliyuga--is 4,320,000 years. One thousand such cycles constitutes one day and another thousand one night of Brahma, who has a lifespan of 100 such 'years'. But after that, Brahma, the Creator, also 'rests'. But what remains ever after that is called the 'Source'. That is what I am telling you to know. Lord Shiva told Uma, "Only meditation on God is true and all the rest is like a dream." All worship, scripture-reading, sacrifices, offerings, prayers etc. are like actions done in a dream. Remembrance of the Name of God is the Truth which is beyond this dream.

So, the third grace is the Guru's, who imparts that Name and Light. One who removes darkness and shows Light is called "Guru". 'Gu' denotes darkness

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and 'ru' denotes light.

The fourth grace is your own. It is called 'self-grace', so that by discarding all kinds of ego, we take the shelter of the Master and realize the true Name and Light. The religion of man, manav dharma, is to see that Light. So far, only human beings have seen it and in future also only humans will see it. There is no difference between a dog or donkey and the man who is satisfied by the three types of ordinary light, forgetting the Inner Light.

When Ravanna was nearing death, Lord Rama sent Lakshman to him to learn political science. Ravanna told Lakshman, "The experience of my whole life in a nutshell is this: Never postpone a good action but immediately postpone an evil action." So, if you consider it worthwhile to know the Light which even a thousand suns cannot equal and the Name which the Ramayana says was remembered and revealed by Lord Shiva, then you should resolve to know it right now. And if you consider it worthless then put it off until tomorrow. If anyone is offended by what I say, I do beg his pardon.

This is the method for controlling the mind. That is the yoga by which we can reach God. That is religion. If we do not realize this yoga, we will have to suffer various sorts of hardship. Religion means happiness. You will be happy only when you follow religion. There is darkness on one side and light on the other. If you continue to live in darkness, you will have to suffer, but if you live in light, you will be happy.

Listen to the Divine Music, O saints, to the Celestial Music!
Sit in lotus position and close your ears.
Concentrate on the subtle inner sounds,
Hear the strains of the Celestial Harmony,
At first the sounds mingle together,
Then they are heard separately,
Bells, conch, lyre and flute,
Cymbals, tambourines and drums.
As the Inner Music wells up, And reveals itself to you,
Your whole being thrills and trembles.
Your mouth is filled with heavenly drops of Nectar,
The Yogis' delight. You forget your own existence.
Your heart is radiant with Light.
Brahmanand says, My mind has merged with that Music.
Realize what I am saying.

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Ganges of Haridwar Flows in Mauritius

During six months, last year, Mahatma Fakiranand Ji and Mahatma Parvati Bai, with the kind blessings of Satguru Shri Satpal Ji Maharaj, propagated ceaselessly the knowledge of truth throughout Mauritius. As a result of their unfatiguable task we noted that some one hundred and forty brothers and sisters including children (teenagers) received Atma Gyan. We had all heard about the third eye "Shiv Netra-Divya Netra" but never before had we been made aware of this great Truth. It was only after listening to the discourses of Mahatma Fakiranand Ji and Mahatma Parvati Bai that the "parda" of our eyes was unveiled and we, too, could realise God. We had become so close to both Mahatmas that their departure caused us great pain and the hundreds of premies who had come to bid them farewell at the airport could not hide their tears. All of us wished that they could come back as soon as possible to quench our thirst. So we humbly requested Satgurudev Ji Maharaj to send Mahatmas often to Mauritius so as to keep this enlightened flame burning and bless us by his lotus feet, Himself.

We feel very much indebted to Satgurudev Ji Maharaj for having responded to our heartiest wish by sending Mahatma Parvati Bai and Bela Bai who did a tremendous job. Those who listened to them for the first time were of the same opinion as stated formerly and were eager to have more and more satsang. The calendar of satsang was already full up to the scheduled departure of the Mahatmas (29th September for Kenya). The number of premies also increased day by day and uptill now about eighty new premies have been added to the list.

On their arrival on 4th July, 1997 premies welcomed them at the airport with great joy. On the same day, a schedule of satsang and various important activities such as "Guru Puja" were set up. Mahatma Parvati Bai accompanied by Mahatma Bela Bai went to all regional centres to meet all premies and held sessions of meditation with them. Everyday satsang was held (day and night) from place to place and premies and aspirants travelled long distances to listen to the discourses for they wanted to be benefitted as much as they could from the presence of both Mahatmas. Programmes were recorded on audio and video cassettes so as to be made use of after the departure of Mahatmas. People also bought the books, audio and video cassettes brought from India. Announcements of every satsang was made on MBC Radio to enable interested persons to attend to. The MBC Radio did recently broadcast an interview of both Mahatmas in the programme Jigyasa presented by Shri Rajendra Arun. Special programmes for radio "Varta Mala" were also recorded to be broadcast during eleven weeks to come. The local newspapers- "The Mauritius Times" and the "Prabhaat"

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also published articles in connection with activities held to inform the public at large of the noble work done during those days by the Mahatmas. "Satguru ki Mahima Anant, Anant kiya Upkar; Lochan Anant Ooghariyan Anant Dikhawan Haar."

On the occasion of Guru Pooja Manav Ekta Sewa Samiti , founded last year by Mahatma Fakiranand Ji and Mahatma Parvati Bai, held a three-day satsang and Guru Pooja from Friday 18th to Sunday 20th July at DeoNiwas, Shantiniketan Street, Roches Noires to venerate to the Lotus Feet of Satgurudev Ji Maharaj. It is said that where there is the will there is the way. So with the blessings of Satgurudev Ji Maharaj we had been able to organise the Pooja within two weeks. With the cooperation of one and all it happened to be a great success. Every four hundred people including premies attended Satsang and after Guru Poojan on 20th July all had Maha Prasad. Premies have decided to celebrate Guru Pooja every year with the same enthusiasm.

On that day Mahatma Parvati Bai and Bela Bai held a meeting with all premies and explained about the responsibilities each premie had to shoulder. All of them heartily accepted their ideas and wished to serve according to their own capacity. The absence of Mahatma Fakiranand Ji was greatly felt and we all wished that he comes along with Satgurudev Ji Maharaj to whom we have already made a humble request.

On the 15th of August,1997 all premies celebrated the Birthday Anniversary of Shri Suyash Ji Maharaj at Shri Ramanandsing Bussawah's place at Lalmatie. After bhajans sung by Shri Hans Gyan Bhajan Mandali, Shri Raj Thacoor, Secretary of the Manav Ekta Sewa Samiti welcomed all premies on that auspicious occasion and declared that 15th August being a historical day for India coincides also with the Birthday of Shri Suyash Ji Maharaj and that of Mahatma Parvati Bai who sang a Birthday Bhajan in his honour. There was also satsang by Mahatma Bela Bai and Parvati Bai after which cakes were distributed and everyone present had Maha Prasad. The Shri Hans Gyan Bhajan Mandali, founded with the blessings of Shri Satgurudev Ji Maharaj by Mahatma Fakiranand Ji and Mahatma Parvati Bai last year, consists mostly of children who are devoting themselves in propagating the Spiritual Knowledge through Bhajans.

-Bahen Vidyotma Heerah

There is no state of union higher than Samadhi, and it is gained through devotion by the grace of the Master. One who has faith in Knowledge and in himself, stills his mind and by daily practice reaches the Divine State.

You should practise the Nectar technique. Nectar drips from the Inner Well, and a person who drinks it succeeds in achieving Samadhi.

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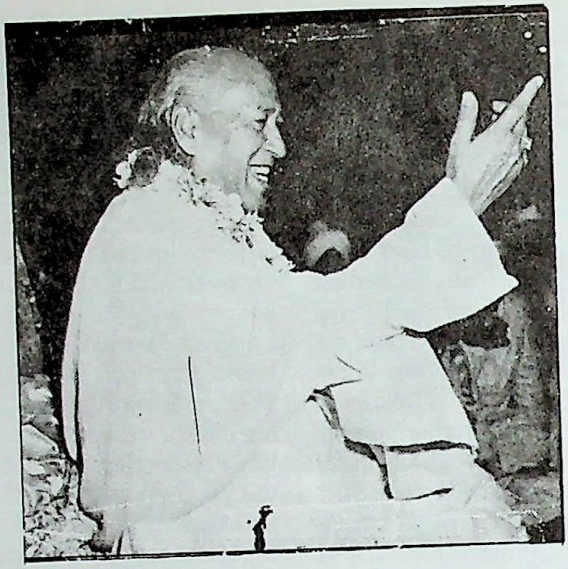

REMEMBERING SHRI HANS JI MAHARAJ

Life is relationship. Human beings are seen involved in cob webs of various types of relationships i.e. blood , social, religious and spiritual relationship. Some of these relationships are depressing and some luckily pleasant and elevating. I have gone through various types of relationship in my life but relationship with Shri Hans Ji Maharaj was not only unique but it was elevating in many ways.

Every individual is born with some tendencies. Some are introvert and inclined towards mystical and spiritual aspect of life. I had somewhat that type of leaning which brought me in the company of Hans Ji Maharaj at a very young age. I was awed by him at the first sight and fell in love with him. I have met hundreds and thousands of persons but none was so attractive, so sparkling, so loveable and magnetic as he was. His smiles were hypnotic. His eyes were full of grace. He was really great and gracious. I have no words to describe his spiritual aura which was so powerful that anyone coming in his contact will be effected by his vibrations of love and spirituality. Comparing is not a spiritual act, therefore, I am not comparing him with any personality but he was unique in all respects and looked singular even in the crowd of millions. Neither he was brainy nor he was a scholar but still he had a depth of vision like Kabir which, the scholars can

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never have. It appears as if he had seen the unseen. He was authentic in his talks and speech. He was straight forward in his approach. His every action and gesture emitted the vibrations of compassion, love and grace. Even his getting angry was enjoyable by the devotees.

The adolescence age is most romantic and impressionable in everybody's life. I was blessed with his company at such a young age that he left lasting impression on my mind and moulded me in many ways. But for him it was difficult for me to sustain faith in spiritual matters but he was a living witness to the authenticity of spiritual life and its realisation as a human possibility. He would emphatically say that what Meera achieved, what Buddha realised, what Nanak sang in divine ecstasy is within the reach of every human being. In fact, every human being is destined to be perfect. What is required is intensity of desire for realisation called "Brahm Jigyasa" in our scriptures. Shri Maharaj Ji will boost the energies of the people around him only for his good and the good of others. I have yet to find a person in my life who will selflessly develop the potential of the person and channelised them in a most elevating manner. He was a catalyst for every disciple and spurred him for higher and better life. He was always positive and developed the positive aspect of every persons life. Once He said to me, "If a person with potential and a good heart comes to me I really make him great, I fully develop him to humanhood. It is my nature and the nature of real Spiritual Master".

The man is so earthly, so worldly that he seldom can appreciate the grace because he is so greedy and voluptuous that he cannot even appreciate the finer graces and benefits that accrues to him unconsciously in the company of the saints. He only thinks them in terms of gross things like money, job, house or son. It is only rare when a feeling of gratitude comes to him when he is pure at heart that he can appreciate and eulogise his greatness.

Shri Hans Ji Maharaj spent his whole life not only teaching religion, but revealing to people the practical knowledge of the experience which is the essence, the core, of all religious teachings. He believed that there is only one true religion for all mankind, which is inborn, natural, eternal and most secret. This si the natural and unbroken path of spirituality, which has been taught by the Masters of all times and lands, and which leads the soul to union with God. Realizing it is the birthright of every human being and his duty, too.

In 1960 Raja Mahendra Pratap arranged a satsang program during which Shri Maharaj Ji gave a very clear exposition of what true religion, or Dharma really is:

"There is only one human race. We are all called `human beings'. As far as I am concerned, there is only one Dharma for all mankind. No great Master ever taught stealing, cheating or telling lies, nor does any modern religion. So why are there separate religions? They are all branches of the same root, but due to their ignorance of this

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root and their own selfish motives, people create all these different sects. In my opinion, remembering God is religion and forgetting Him is irreligion or sin. The basis of Dharma, and the essence of it is realising the conscious life-entity which is contained within every speck of Creation, which dwells within every being, and which is called Ishwar, God, Allah, Wahe-Guru and various other names. Science explores matter, and Dharma explores consciousness. The same scientific principles apply through the world and in all languages, because they are natural laws. In the same way, the essence of Dharma is a natural phenomenon and applies to all human beings. It cannot be different for different people. The principal aim of every great saint was to clear up the confusion and ignorance perpetrated in the name of religion.

'Only a living realized saint can reveal the phenomenon which is the spirit of religion. We have to ask ourselves: What was the actual religion of those Masters, on whose names religions have been propagated? Was Guru Nanak a Sikh? Were the ancient rishis Hindus? Was Mohammed a Muslim? Was Jesus Christ a Christian? Whenever a great Teacher appeared on earth, he was never believed by the theologians, scholars or religious leaders of the time, but after he had left this world those same people built statues of him and compiled scriptures about him and used them to confuse people. Now they sing his glory loud and long. They hesitate to accept the great soul when he comes before them, but build up sects in his name after he has gone, and feather their nests in the process. The living Master always gave a practical experience of the Knowledge which is the core of religion, yet people want to get that same Knowledge from the Master's portrait or scriptures, which is impossible. Only a living Teacher can reveal that Knowledge. People bow to idols of Rama and Krishna and believe them to be God, but the Satguru, who is the living embodiment of Knowledge, who is eulogised by all scriptures and who is the destroyer of ignorance, is always accused of being a heretic. People don't believe that the Lord can incarnate Himself. Rama, Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Guru Nanak, etc. all came as human beings. You can believe them to be whatever you want, but the fact remains that they were in human form and they spoke the language of their times. Most of their contemporaries refused to believe in their divinity. Very few actually served them and fully believed in their teachings, but they were the ones who benefitted. But now that they have gone we cannot ask their statues for the living Knowledge, nor can they give it. We can't understand the mysteries of Knowledge from their scriptures, nor can they make us realize those things which the Master made his disciples understand while he was alive."

On many occasions and during many satsangs Shri Maharaj Ji explained very succinctly what religion really is Here are relevant excerpts from those satsangs:

"Lord Krishna instructed Arjuna, then opened his Third Eye and showed

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him his Universal Form. He revealed to him the imperishable phenomenon which he called Rajvidya, the Sovereign Science. Nowadays, a lot of people study the Gita, but do they see that same Universal Form of the Lord? Is their inner vision unveiled? Listen! Only a living Master can reveal living Knowledge. Non-conscious matter cannot do that. Whatever is being perpetrated in the name of religion today is merely devotion to material objects and insentients. How can anyone teach devotion to Consciousness if he himself doesn't know what Consciousness is? Consciousness cannot be known without a perfect Guru, but as religious leaders and fanatics deem it degrading to approach the Satguru, they carry on in their own ways, promoting their individual sects and teachings and advancing their own selfish aims all in the name of a previous holy Master. So humanity stays fragmented in groups and people are ranged against each other. Those who foster parochialism are the lethal enemies of mankind. Man's condition nowadays is truly peculiar. Depending on how I wear my hair, I'm a friend of Rama and a foe of Allah, or vice-versa. That's religion today! If I can reel off a few quotations from scripture I'm regarded as a man of spiritual wisdom, but is reciting scriptures parrot-fashion religion or spiritual insight? Even a parrot can repeat `Ram-Ram', `Allah-Allah' or `Wahe-Guru, Wahe-Guru'. Does that mean that the parrot is wise and spiritual.

`Each and every sect flourishing today regards itself as the true benefactor and friend of mankind. As well as the main religions of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism we also have Kabir Pantheist, Dadu Pantheist, Radha Soamis, Brahma Kumaris, etc. Each major religion has divisions. Followers of every sect believe themselves to be the only true devotees of God and their founder to be the only true Master. However, does anyone stop to think about what is gained by following these sects? There are two ways in which a person may profit-physically or spiritually. People may well be gaining something financially or materially from following a particular group, but spiritually they are not getting anywhere. If we study these groups' ideologies in an unbiased and sensible fashion, we will have to concede that they all used the name of a past prophet, saint or divine Master, and have gone into business for themselves. Someone makes a living by displaying a Teacher's statue to the public, another promotes himself by getting people to sing the names of past Masters, someone else thinks that reciting the Master's words is the real way to save mankind. But the point is that no one is following the instructions laid down by those Masters in the great scriptures of the world. Everyone just follows like sheep.

I am an Indian. My body is made from the same earth as yours. As a fellow human being I desire the well-being of this country, and not only this country, but of all people throughout the world. Dharma is that which gives salvation. I am revealing the same true Knowledge which each realised Master revealed in his own time to all aspirants, without

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discrimination. Our leaders don't have time to hear about spirituality or to know it. They are busy trying to eradicate untouchability. They talk about building up moral character, about unity and cooperation, but they don't know how to remove that sense of separateness which poisons man's mind. Only spirituality has the power to do that. I am teaching the Dharma which benefits and liberates everyone, because it is the same for everyone. Only by receiving the Knowledge of God's Holy Name and Light from the Satguru and meditating on it can one achieve liberation. This is the eternal and imperishable religion, the true Dharma. All other religions change. I am presenting the truths of this eternal religion to you. Religion is for human beings, and I regard you all as fellow human beings. Only man can talk about spiritual wisdom and realise it. That is why all the Teachers and scriptures emphasised the importance of the human existence. The Ramayana says that such an incarnation is rare even for the gods and is the doorway to liberation. Guru Nanak said, `Friends, now that you are human beings you had better meditate on the Holy Name.' Muslims call the human frame asharfulmulkat and English-speaking people call it `the crown of creation.'

"There are three types of people in the world. The first and best type are those who behave like a winnowing fan. In other words, they sift and discard the chaff, the non-essential and flawed and retain the kernels of goodness and virtue. The second category of people are like the mortar and pestle. They grind up everything - the essential and the superficial both - and take in both. The third type are those with no discerning faculty, who are like sieves. They let the non-essential through and block the essential. The wise and prudent are those who are revealed the seed of religion by the Satguru, consolidate their experience of it and make their lives meaningful. But human beings are not humane anymore. They look human but act like wild animals. Man thinks only of how he can cause the maximum suffering to his neighbour. The most powerful nations are busy manufacturing the most powerful bombs to kill the most people. Man is not meant to do that. A humane person is always concerned for the welfare of others. So if people don't work for the sake of other people, who do they think will do it? Birds and animals?

`People talk about religion and God-realisation and praise at the top of their voices the previous holy Masters, but they do the exact opposite of what those Masters taught. So what was the use, in the long run, of all those great souls' coming into this world, if people have become more and more blood thirsty? People act no better than dogs. A dog won't let a strange dog enter his street. Human mentality has become just like that. Even though Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs and Christians have all been created by the same God, whom they all call the Lord of the world and Sustainer of all, and even though they have names for Him, still moulvis, padres, pandits, priests and other religious brokers tear this world apart

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with their quarrelling.

'Hindus consider serving and worshipping cows to be part of their religion, while Muslims regard killing and eating cows to be part of theirs. Hindus wear a sacred thread, while Muslims consider this sacreligious. The majority of Hindus worship idols while Muslims are totally opposed to this. Millions of people have been sacrificed on the altar of religion. The partition of India was due to religious differences.

'Is this religion? If a religion can't protect and save us it doesn't deserve to be called religion. True Dharma brings people together and increases their mutual love, but that which passes for religion nowadays only sets people against each other, resulting in bloodshed.

'God's laws are the same for all. Everyone's body is made from the same five elements. Everyone is born and dies in the same way. Everyone's eyes are for seeing. everyone's ears are for hearing. Everyone's hunger is relieved by eating and his thirst by drinking water. The same sun and moon shine on us all. This proves that God, Who runs the entire Creation, has made one set of rules for all people, no matter what their religion or country. God's laws are the same for all. The only difference is the way we express them in our various languages and dialects. But calling something by different names doesn't mean that its properties change.

'Water is called by different names, but its thirst-quenching property doesn't change. In the same way, giving different names or definitions to the Supreme Power does not make His instrinstic Nature, His real Form, different for different people. Sugar tastes sweet to everyone, and similarly, the thing which is the true essence of religion brings joy and bliss to everyone, protects everyone and can liberate everyone.

'If you go into it carefully, you will find that all the holy Masters realized the True Reality themselves and inspired others to realise it too. They gave others the Knowledge by which they could do so. That which Prophet Mohammed called Ilahi-Noor and Pak Nam, Guru Nanak called Chandna and Sat Nam. Christ called it Light and Word of God. In the Ramayana it is known as Param Prakash and Ram Nam. The Gita calls it Universal Form and Akshar Brahm. All the Masters in their respective languages taught others to know the same Truth. Nothing is superior to religion in bringing peace and joy to the human heart and spirit. Religion is the only thing which engenders mutual love, affection and tolerance between people. It keeps them away from wrong-doing . Religion is the power which is the benefactor and deliverer of all, and to this day it has not been to anyone's detriment, nor will it ever be, to follow the path of Dharma. That is why all the saints and divine Masters, in their own languages and time, urged others to realise the one and only Truth.

Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism are the six major religions of the world and their principal scriptures are Rigveda, Koran, Bible, Torah, Zend Avesta and Tripitaka. Any impartial

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and in-depth comparative study of these holy books reveals that they are all talking fundamentally about the same things. We find similarities in their stories, parables and sayings, and it seems as if they have all sprung from the same source. They all offer succour and peace to the suffering soul. However, the religious middlemen of all countries, Whether pandits or priests, moulvis, padres or lamas, have used their countries' unique customs, habits and languages as the foundation for starting a multiplicity of sects. It is all pure selfishness. The followers of any sect are supposed to believe only in that sect's teachings and read only its scriptures. Calling such narrow-mindedness 'faith', they stay far removed from the truth. They call the believers of other religions heathen and so they fight. Instead of the peace and happiness promised them, all they get is hate, suffering and intolerance. When such a situation gets too much out of control, a great saint or Divine Messenger appears on the scene in whichever country has the greatest need of him at the time. Then, of course, the followers of that land's prevailing religion oppose him. The followers of any religion should open their books and see how their prophet or Teacher was persecuted. Christ was crucified, Mohammed was persecuted by Kuresh, the High Priest of Mecca. Shams Tabriz was skinned alive. St.Mansur was crucified. The priests of Benares plotted to kill Tulsidas. Kabir and Guru Nanak were thrown in jail. Rama and Krishna were exiled. Many attempts were made to kill St.Meera Bai.

Divine Teachers incarnate when the Truth becomes obscured by ignorance and lies. No matter what obstacles come in their path, they don't stop until they have completed their mission. They don't teach anything new or strange, but resurrect the true teachings and spread them anew."

Zoroaster, the prophet of the Parsees, said, "I believe in and revere all Masters before me. They were all pointing the way to righteousness."

Lord Buddha said, "There have been several Buddhas prior to me and there will be others after me. I have come to spread anew the Light of old."

The Jain masters said, "Tirthankars keep on coming into this world to teach people the same True Way."

The Bible says, "There is nothing new under the sun." Jesus also said, "I have not come to destroy the scriptures, but to fulfil them."

The Koran says, "The Koran is that self-existent Truth to which all scriptures testify, so they are all true." and "And nothing has been revealed to you which has not be revealed by the divine messengers of yore."

So the wise person listens to the living Teacher, verifies his teachings by the holy books of his own religion and, ignoring all opposition, pursues the path of Truth. Such people have always profited from the presence of the living Master, are profiting now, and will always profit. On the other hand, those who don't listen carefully to what the Master says don't reap any benefit, so

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they turn against him. Then, after he has departed from this world, they create a new religion in his name and lead people astray.

Shri Hans Ji Maharaj never wanted to set a new sect or religion. He was neither primitive in his teachings, nor modern. He was rather eternal, and ever fresh. A hundred wise men agree is not just a saying, but is a fact. That is why all the saints emphasized the importance of knowing and practising the one universal and true religion. They taught the True Path to illuminate everyone's lives, just as the risen sun gives heat and light to all. "There is only one religion, just as laws of the nature are one for all human beings, so is the real religion. If man knows that and practises that, he becomes enlightened. I preach unity and show the practical way to realise it. No great soul ever came to start a new religion. They come to reveal the eternal original and universal truth which is the same for all mankind", pronounced Shri Hans Ji Maharaj.

-C.L.Tandon

The prolonged dream that we call life.

There was a farmer who lived in the countryside. He was a real jnani. He earned his living by farming. He was married, and after many years a son was born to him, whom he named Haru. The parents loved the boy dearly. This was natural, since he was the one precious gem of the family. On account of his religious nature the farmer was loved by the villagers. One day he was working in the field when a neighbour came and told him that Haru had an attack of cholera. The farmer at once returned home and arranged for treatment for the boy. But Haru died. The other members of the family were grief-stricken, but the farmer acted as if nothing had happened. He consoled his family and told them that grieving was futile. Then he went back to his field. On returning home he found his wife weeping even more bitterly. She said to him: "How heartless you are! You haven't shed one tear for the child." The farmer replied quietly: "Shall I tell you why I haven't wept? I had a very vivid dream last night. I dreamt I had become a king; I was the father of eight sons and was very happy with them. Then I woke up. Now I am greatly perplexed. Should I weep for those eight sons or for this one Haru?"

The farmer was a janani; therefore, he realized that the waking state is an unreal as the dream state. There is only one eternal substance, and that is the Atman.

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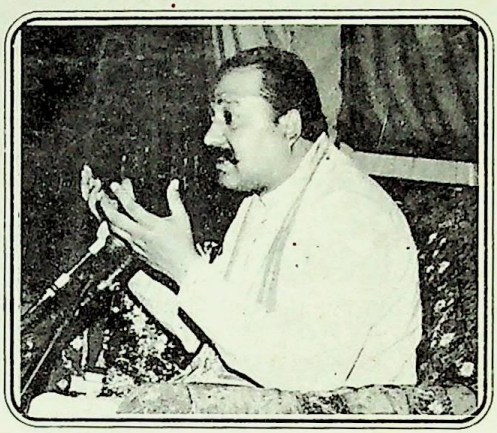

If you want to know God then get that Holy Name from the saints which is omnipresent and living essence of Spiritual Knowledge. Saints have glorified the Names of God but we must understand the esoteric meaning of the Name. The Name is not only a qualifying adjective of God's attributes it is the living essence the God itself, its power and energy. All external Names are spoken by the tongue but the real Name is beyond speech. It is the secret and sacred Name. Devotion to this Name is the gold mine for all happiness it is independent of all externalities but it can be attained only through the company and blessing of the saints.

-SHRI SATPALJI MAHARAJ

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